



At Love's Bidding

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After helping her grandfather at their Boston auction house, Miranda Wimplegate discovers she's accidentally sold a powerful family's prized portrait to an anonymous bidder. Desperate to appease the furious family, her grandfather tracks it to the Missouri Ozarks and makes an outlandish offer to buy the local auction house if they promise not to sell anything until he arrives.

Upon their arrival, however, they discover their new business doesn't deal in fine antiques, but in livestock. And its manager, ruggedly handsome Wyatt Ballentine, is frustrated to discover his fussy new bosses don't know a thing about the business he's single-handedly kept afloat. Faced with more cattle than they can count--but no mysterious painting--Miranda and Wyatt form an unlikely but charged partnership to try and salvage a bad situation getting worse.

At Love's Bidding Details

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From Reader Review At Love's Bidding for online ebook

Julia Wilson says

At Love's Bidding by Regina Jennings is the second historical Christian novel to be set at Ozarks. It was wonderful to meet up with familiar characters and to enjoy the antics of Betsy again. It can however be read as a stand-alone, as the focus of the novel is on two new characters, Wyatt and Miranda.

Miranda's family own a prestigious auction house in Boston. When a painting is accidentally sold and mailed to Missouri, Miranda and her grandfather travel there, in the hopes of recovering the painting. Here they meet Wyatt, an adopted son of the Ballantines, who works in an auction house. Together they search for the painting, unaware of the consequences and the life changing effect.

At Love's Bidding is a delightful novel with many different themes, and with God at the centre. Both Wyatt and Miranda are good, faith filled people trying to live lives that honour Jesus. They both have hearts for the poor and the hurting. In them we see the commandment being lived out of 'taking care of the widows and orphans'. They both see beyond people's clothes and stations, looking into their hearts.

The novel deals with the theme of family. Wyatt did not know his real parents, who both died of a fever, but was lovingly bought up by the Ballentines. There is a rumour that he is illegitimate, so he works hard to prove his worth. In contrast, Miranda has a well to do family who love her, but she is seeking something more in life than just being married off to her cousin. Everyone is part of God's family, and the reader is reminded that we do not have to work to earn God's love, He just loves us anyway. Miranda opens her heart to the street children, showing that family is not always about a blood line, it is about a heart line too.

Whilst reading the novel, I was reminded of Genesis 50:20 which talks of what men meant for harm, God meant for good. This certainly plays out within the novel, as character's surrender themselves to God's perfect plans when life deals them unexpected hands.

Within At Love's Bidding is the continual theme of caring. Miranda's grandfather is used to being a proud and important man. As his signs of dementia become more obvious, Miranda does her best to care for him. The nurturing roles of child and adult are reversed.

I really enjoyed At Love's Bidding. It was very much a rags to riches type novel, showing the shallowness of some people towards financial wealth. This was in complete contrast with the richness of heart of Miranda and Wyatt towards the poor. I am hoping there will be many more novels in this series by Regina Jennings, as I am not yet ready to bid farewell to the Missouri countryside.

Carole Jarvis says

Reviewed at The Power of Words: <http://bit.ly/1S0ZL4b>

I am so glad to have had the opportunity to review this book because I've found a new author to enjoy. At Love's Bidding has what I enjoy most – rich characterization, humor, appealing hero and heroine, romance with chemistry, inspiration – all beautifully blended into an intriguing storyline. This book can stand alone, although reading the previous book, A Most Inconvenient Marriage, would give a better feel for setting and characters. I will definitely be reading Regina's earlier novels.

The Ozark Mountain Romance series is set in a beautiful part of the country, the Missouri Ozarks. From the Boston auction house, to the small Missouri town of Pine Gap and its people, to the livestock auction house, Regina creates a vivid sense of place. The world of auctions takes center stage, and I loved the sharp contrast

between the dignified estate-style auction and the carnival-like atmosphere of livestock auctions. There's some surprising twists and turns, all of which lead to a flawless and satisfying ending.

Wyatt and Miranda are well-drawn characters that I cared about. With an uncertain background, Wyatt worked hard to prove his worth, only to frequently have his dreams shot down by a younger brother. Miranda's strength is that, although she struggles with insecurity, she loves and is totally dedicated to her family. Both Wyatt and Miranda hate injustice and have a heart for those less fortunate. Faith is a natural part of their lives and Miranda comes to find her true self through her journey to the Ozarks.

Secondary characters, like Abigail, Jeremiah and Betsy from the previous book, add much richness. And then there's Miranda's Cousin Cornelius, a phrenologist who measures the size and shape of his patients' heads to discern their character, personality, and mental state. I cheered at Wyatt's words to him: "If you're using science to put limits on what God can accomplish with a person, that's where we part ways."

The humor which Regina infuses into her writing is wonderful. You'll find it throughout the novel, sometimes in laugh-out-loud scenes - like the first livestock auction and the headless chicken - and simmering beneath the surface at other times. But don't be fooled into thinking this a "light" read. It does read easily, but there's hidden depth in life issues - like social status, stewardship of wealth, and the heartbreak of dementia. I found Wyatt and Miranda's patient, loving care for her grandfather most touching - and personally inspiring. These words from Miranda's father should speak to all of us:

"We've learned many lessons from your grandfather over the years, lessons that he enjoyed passing down. Caring for him will be the last lesson he has to teach us. It's up to us to learn it well."

Highly recommended. 5 stars based on how much I enjoyed the characters and story.

Thank you to Litfuse Publicity for providing a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Staci says

Cute second story in Regina Jennings' Ozark series. In this story, the heroine Miranda is a Boston auction worker with a love of family and desire to help those less fortunate. The hero Wyatt is a Missouri auctioneer.

The mystery of the painting was the main thread of the story. The side story of Miranda's grandfather going through dementia was sad and funny at the same time.

The novel was stronger at the beginning and end than the middle, however, overall, I enjoyed this novel. I recommend this series for fans of Jen Turano.

Sarah Ruut says

One mix-up leads to another, landing Miranda and Wyatt in some awkwardly funny situations!

I love the humor sprinkled throughout *At Love's Bidding*. Not only are the circumstances comical, but the characters are fantastic. From young Betsy, who manages to find her way into the middle of most everything,

to elderly Elmer, bless his heart...

While we might not find ourselves in an auction house squabble, the lessons Miranda and Wyatt learn are certainly ones we might find ourselves learning, too. Courage, forgiveness, determination, and patience all play their part in the journey.

At Love's Bidding is a wonderful story worth reading again. Having read the first book in this series (A Most Inconvenient Marriage), I enjoyed visiting "old friends" once again. This one could certainly stand alone, but you won't want to miss the first book, as it is equally delightful. At Love's Bidding is headed for my "keeper" shelf!

(This review was originally published on my blog -- sarahrut.com. I received a complimentary copy of this novel in exchange for an honest review. The thoughts expressed here are entirely my own.)

Cara Putman says

Miranda is on a mad dash to save her family's business by salvaging a painting they auctioned off by mistake. But to do so, her grandfather buys a sale barn -- one that sells livestock rather than the art and heirlooms that are family sells. Wyatt Ballentine is content with his life -- he thinks. Then Miranda rushes in and upends his safe, comfortable life. The two are from completely different worlds. She's caught between rich and poor, and he is completely backwoods country. But now that their lives have collided, they have to decide what they will do about it as the mystery draws them together and then shoves them apart.

I loved how this story wove in a little mystery and a lot of God. I never felt preached at -- rather I felt encouraged and challenged. This book is perfect for romance lovers who love historicals that also strengthen their faith.

Heidi Robbins (Heidi Reads...) says

I loved the high contrast between the locations Miranda and Wyatt are from, and that they each get to experience the other's lifestyle. Going from Boston to the wilderness of Pine Gap definitely put Miranda at a disadvantage, but she rallies and attributes she felt weak in such as self-esteem, confidence and courage become strengths as she rises to the challenges before her. There is humor in many of the scenes but I think the compassion that Miranda and Wyatt both share is highlighted as they interact with the community and prioritize the needs of others. The mystery unfolds and takes the story in a direction I didn't foresee but complicates the budding romance between Miranda and Wyatt. Their special moments together are well-depicted, I could feel the tension and joy as they discover the thrill of new love.

(Thank you to Bethany House and Litfuse Publicity for a copy of the book in exchange for my honest review)

Aerykah says

I'll try my best to get a review posted before I leave for camp Sunday, but..... we'll see. ;)

Hannah says

I loved every moment of this lighthearted romantic comedy...except it turned pretty meaty and dramatic somewhere along the way! Many characters from the first book reappeared in this one, most notably young Betsy—who takes a hand in affairs with as much enthusiasm as ever. I'll definitely be rereading it and have already loaned it to my sister.

Other than a considerable kiss, this one's squeaky clean. 12+

Deanne Patterson says

I enjoyed this even better than *A Most Inconvenient Marriage* (Ozark Mountain Romance #1). I laughed out loud at times but there were serious parts too with Miranda's grandfather and his confusion due to his Alzheimers. I look forward to reading the third book in the series when it releases.

Vera Godley says

Author Regina Jennings brings good clean stories to life with her quirky, sweet, irksome characters. You'll find as I always do when reading a Jennings book that you get a lighthearted feeling because there is fun, joviality, and downright silliness sometimes in the characters as she develops the story around them.

When Miranda meets Wyatt, it is under hilariously disturbing circumstances. She and her grandfather have just traveled by train from the cultured city of Boston to the rough and tough Ozarks. Expecting to be met by some transportation to take them to their final destination which they assume is a cultured auction house situated in a cultured city or town, they find themselves met by a suave young man seated upon a rough wagon. Right after his arrival, another "gentleman" arrives on the scene and snatches the wagon right out from under the first and departs. This leaves Miranda and her grandfather to fend for themselves.

As the story progresses, Miranda and grandfather find the fancy auction house is actually a stinking animal barn where cows, sheep, goats, and chickens are auctioned. Not some fancy place which they were expecting their newly purchased auction house to be.

As the story progresses, the funny turns sad and more realistic. Miranda's grandfather is behaving weirdly and totally out of character. Actually, he is spiraling downward into dementia.

Wyatt shows a tender and caring side as he grows fond of Miranda and her grandfather. He is kindness embodied in a strong manly form.

I found this a fun and interesting story touching on a bit of Americana from the turn of the century. Spoiler alert: No, grandfather doesn't get any better. This is a bittersweet tale that embraces the need for caring people to watch over those cascading down the dark halls of dementia.

I recommend this for light reading with a touch of serious matter.

DISCLOSURE: I received a complimentary copy to facilitate this review. Opinions expressed are solely my own. I was not compensated for this review.

Sarah Sundin says

At Love's Bidding is a fun and fresh take on the fish-out-of-water tale. Miranda's adjustment to rustic Pine Gap is humorous, especially her attempts at poetic auction descriptions of the cattle! Wyatt is an appealing hero, struggling to find his identity, while Miranda struggles to find her voice. And as always, Regina Jennings has written a romance with both laughs and heart. Don't miss this story!

Anne Osterlund says

Miranda is a city girl. Boston born and Boston raised. Her greatest act of rebellion is to sneak the cook's pastries out the back door and feed the treats initially prepared for the patrons of her family's auction house to the local newspaper boys.

Then Grandpa accidentally auctions off a painting that never should have gone up for sale. Her family's reputation and livelihood are on the line. And have, apparently, just been shipped off to . . . Pine Gap, Missouri. But Grandpa isn't the type to give in. He promptly purchases the Pine Gap auction house and determines to track down the painting and check out his new investment. Miranda signs on for the adventure and to take care of her grandfather.

Little does she know that the auction house is actually a livestock auction. One managed by an outrageously uncouth young man named Wyatt who punches out her driver, purloins the wagon she and her grandfather have procured for their ride into Pine Gap, and steals their luggage! What's more, keeping Grandfather out of trouble in Pine Gap turns out to be a *much* greater chore than Miranda could ever have fathomed.

At Love's Bidding is a tongue & cheek romp with both a sense of humor and a soul. Grandfather's struggle with dementia provides a serious foundation beneath the myriad scrapes, disasters, and casualties that befall our young heroine on her way to true love. I liked nearly everyone in the book and particularly enjoyed the population of Pine Gap.

Carrie Schmidt (Reading is My SuperPower) says

Regina Jennings is one of my go-to authors when I want to read something that will make me swoon and grin all at the same time. At Love's Bidding, the second book in her Ozark Mountains series, does exactly that. There's even a dash of suspense to make mystery fans like me all the happier!

Colorful characters, entertaining antics, and a romance that will flutter your heart – these are the strengths of At Love's Bidding. Nearly every emotion was engaged while I read, from laughter to tears to sympathetic mortification to swooniness (new word I coined just now). And Wyatt. *dreamy sigh* (I haven't used one of those in a while. It felt good.) Wyatt is just THE ideal hero. I dare you to read this and not get all twitterpated when he's in the scene. Especially one particular scalp-massage scene. Whew!

While *At Love's Bidding* can absolutely be read as a standalone novel, readers who've already fallen in love with the characters in *A Most Inconvenient Marriage* will be delighted to follow up with them a few years down the road. Most specifically, we get to spend a great deal of time with now-11-year-old Betsy Huckabee whose precocious antics brought much humor and mayhem to *Marriage*. It was fun seeing Josiah as a young man, too, complete with hints at what's to come in his story, which can be found in the upcoming novella collection *With This Ring*. And perhaps in the closing paragraphs of *At Love's Bidding*, Ms. Jennings has left her readers a clue as to the heroine of her next book? I, for one, would LOVE that to be the case!!

Perhaps the most meaningful aspect of the book to me was Miranda's grandfather and his mental decline. As the granddaughter of not one but two beloved grandmothers who suffered from the excruciating goodbye of Alzheimer's, I found Jennings' treatment of this type of illness to be honest and compassionate.

While *A Most Inconvenient Marriage* is my favorite of the two books, *At Love's Bidding* was a delightful way to spend my afternoon! Regina Jennings always delivers a sweet story loaded with vivid characters and peppered with hilarity and romance. This latest book is no exception. If you are a fan of Karen Witemeyer, Jen Turano, Mary Connealy, or Melissa Jagears, then you need to be reading Regina Jennings too!

(I received a copy of this book in exchange for only my honest review.)

Dawn says

Miranda Wimplegate's family owns an auction house in Boston. When her grandfather mistakenly sells a painting that the owner's family did not wish to be sold, Miranda and her family are willing to do whatever it takes to return the painting to its rightful owners. Their research into who purchased the painting lead them to a small town in the Ozarks that has an auction house up for sale. Hoping to make amends, her grandfather purchases the auction house and all of its contents sight unseen. Miranda and her grandfather then travel across the county to their newly purchased auction house only to discover that the house specializes in livestock not antiques. With her grandfather's health rapidly declining, Miranda has no choice but to enlist the help of the manager Wyatt Ballentine to help move the livestock from the auction house. Wyatt's dreamed of purchasing the sale barn for years. So when these city folks arrive in town, he's hurt to find out that they are his new bosses. Yet he understands his community. He sees that neither the pretty Miranda nor her grandfather know the first thing about livestock, so he helps them out. After all, the sooner they find what they are looking for, the sooner they will be gone and his life can return to normal. Neither Wyatt or Miranda count on the attraction and the sparks that fly between them.

While this book may be part of a series, I found that it stands alone. The cover on this one caught my eye. It's whimsical and looks like a lot of fun.

As I started reading, I couldn't help but be delighted. I've read a lot of Regina's books before, and I forget how she can write romantic comedy. I loved watching Miranda struggle with the fact that their auction house housed livestock and not priceless heirlooms. And how gentle she was with her grandfather. I just sighed a little then.

I loved the sparks between Wyatt and Miranda. I thought that their banter was great. I also figured out that there was more to Wyatt than we were first led to believe. Yet when it came out what exactly made there to be more to Wyatt than appearing, I loved Miranda's reaction.

I received this book from the author for the purpose of promoting. My thoughts and opinions are my own.

Recommended to fans of Mary Connealy, Karen Witemeyer, Regina Jennings, Melissa Tagg

Rating - 4 stars

Paula Vince says

It's a comedy of errors. There's one mix-up on the heels of another, and so on. The Wimplegates are a respectable, working class family of auctioneers facing big trouble. They accidentally sold the wrong item, and need to find the missing painting quick smart for the owners. Miranda accompanies her grandfather to follow the slight lead they have, but they don't expect to end up in hillbilly territory, where there are dangerous bandits as well as sweeping beauty.

The romance is thoroughly enjoyable. I'm sure many girls would be willing to travel to remote country towns to find some manly backwoods boy like Wyatt, but unfortunately, that doesn't seem to be the way it works, in real life or novels either. Guys like him only seem to drop into the lives of girls who aren't looking for them. Miranda has a long held family understanding with Cousin Cornelius, the phrenologist who loves examining the bumps and contours on people's skulls.

I appreciate this type of novel, because sometimes it takes a good comedy to highlight the ridiculous aspects of life that we buy into with all seriousness. First, people rely on social standing, job status or other titles to feel good about themselves. Even though it may be more subtle in our era, the pressure still exists. Wyatt's fluctuations in fortune during the course of this novel pack a punch. He's in the perfect position to learn first hand how silly it is to wait for cues from others before you give yourself permission to consider yourself OK.

Grandfather Wimplegate's condition is touching. Nobody calls it by any of its modern terms in this historical novel, but it's clear what ails him. Miranda grapples with the reasonable seeming question of why. If God is supposed to add wisdom with increasing years, what's the deal here? In spite of the poignant aspect, Grandfather's condition adds many of the comic moments to the story.

I'm looking forward to reading more novels in this whimsical, funny series.

Thanks to Bethany House and Net Galley for my review copy.
